

To Whom It May Concern:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently soliciting input on proposed land acquisitions within the Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM). The project includes the immediate acquisition of two 40-acre inholding parcels located on Black Mesa and a phased acquisition of 621-acres of inholdings near the southern portion of the Monument, and will conclude with the acquisition of two sections of edge holdings adjacent to the southern boundary of the AFNM.

BACKGROUND

The BLM has been pursuing acquisition of the Cross Y Ranch for several years. The owner of the ranch excluded approximately 97 acres containing significant facilities and improvements from the larger property. This now makes the remaining approximately 2059-acre property available for acquisition by the BLM (see attached maps). These parcels include substantial water rights; nearly one mile of the Agua Fria River; more than two miles of Squaw Creek; wildlife migratory corridors; many cultural resources including several large pueblo ruins, rock art sites, and artifact scatters; and opportunities for public access to Monument lands. The parcels are highly scenic and include one of the densest stands of saguaro cacti in Arizona.

The Conservation Fund has since acquired the two 40-acre inholding parcels on Black Mesa and the 621-acre inholding around the Cross Y Ranch. Interim acquisition of these parcels by The Conservation Fund makes it possible for the BLM to acquire these parcels in phases using Land and Water Conservation Act funding. If BLM successfully acquires the two 40-acre and 621-acre parcels, The Conservation Fund intends to purchase the remaining 1,278-acre parcel for BLM's potential acquisition utilizing Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act funding (see attached map).

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The Purpose of the project is to acquire 1,979 acres of lands encompassed by, and next to, the Agua Fria National Monument. The Need is to preserve cultural and natural resources of these parcels as directed by the AFNM Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (2010).

Proposal

The BLM has worked with the Cross Y Ranch owner and The Conservation Fund to acquire lands within and adjoining the AFNM. The proposal is to acquire both the inholdings and edge holdings through a phases approach. First, the BLM will immediately acquire two 40-acre inholding parcels located on Black Mesa. In phases, the BLM has proposed to acquire the remaining 621 acres of inholdings near the southern portion of the Monument. Finally, the land acquisition will conclude with the acquisition of two sections of edge holdings adjacent to the southern boundary of the Monument.

YOUR FEEDBACK

The forthcoming Environmental Assessment will consider impacts to natural resources and your comments. Your feedback on this project proposal is requested to develop resource impact analysis and alternative proposals. For consideration in the Environmental Assessment, please submit comments on the proposed project by January 10, 2014. Comments may be submitted via email to **Amanda James at ajames@blm.gov** (please include "**Cross Y**" in the email subject) or via mail to:

BLM Phoenix District Office
Attention: **Cross Y** / Amanda James
21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85027

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Amanda James
Monument Manager

Enclosure